

GMG's
Market Buzz
Presents...



Top 100 Roto Keeper Players

February 2012 Edition

Volume 2 - Edition 6

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GMG’s Introduction – February Edition

Mark it. One calendar year has passed since the first Market Buzz Roto Guide was published, and what a journey it has been! Many up-and-coming hockey enthusiasts paid their dues while contributing to this stellar series, essentially paving the way to many more aspiring writers. This edition is no different.

Geared towards the NHL’s Trade Deadline, Mac Vincent ([@MacVincent1](#)) dissects each franchise while giving insight on the potential buyers and sellers around the league. On the other side of the pond, Yas Guthe ([@Gguthe](#)) offers fantasy hockey poolies tips on how to tackle trade deadline pressure in order to get that much-needed boost come playoff time.

Mac Vincent also happens to be the latest member to join the Black Aces family. He took over the reins on the Tampa Bay Lightning coverage and also jumped at an opportunity to publish the Wednesday night Stud & Duds recap, replacing forum favourite Garrett Williams.

Included in the PDF is the Trade Fever Archives, just in time for a deadline refresher. Recently, part one of a new jack-of-all-trades Trade Fever was released. Look for the trilogy to wrap up and be featured in full this March.

Finally, if you have not participated in Steve Laidlaw’s ([@SteveLaidlaw](#)) March Madness themed Royal Rumble Cage Match, make sure to do so. Who knows, you could very well cast the deciding vote! Introduction can be found [here](#).

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GMG's Trade Fever

Trade Fever's primary focus is on playing the player. TF gives insight on how to read your opponents and predict their behaviours. It also outlines player personalities, biases and preferences. It may even open your eyes to patterns and trends seen in drafts and at the trade table. Enjoy!

Trade Fever I - Drafts

[~ Monday August 9th 2010](#)

"The draft is about to start. You feel everyone's hype with their lists in hand. Like you, they did their homework and are just as anxious to pick the team that will carry them through the highs and lows of the season. You think you have the perfect game plan? So do they. It's funny how you can spend countless hours trying to predict who's going to be available (by crossing out the obvious choices, of course) in the 10th round, 15th round etc... Sometimes it works, most times it doesn't. This article is aimed at increasing your chances of getting it right."

Trade Fever II - Learning to Read Your Opponents

[~ Monday August 23rd 2010](#)

"In the last Trade Fever, we discussed what a draft involves and introduced ways to maximize the value of your picks by being aware of your surroundings. That article also hinted at the fact that by reading opposing managers, you could better your team's selections and results. Well, this time around we'll go deeper into that subject as there's more to winning your league than simply using statistics. To better your chances at achieving success, you must also understand how to play the player or else you'll find yourself being the one that's played. This article aims at helping you get the edge over your opponents by reading their clues and biases."



Trade Fever III - Types of Preferences: Players Edition

[~ Monday September 6th 2010](#)

"Just like the real NHL, every Fantasy GM builds their team differently and in turn looks for specific pieces to complement their team's puzzle. It becomes obvious to see which managers build their teams from strong drafts, from those that attempt to achieve success through trading. By looking at the teams in your league, you'll have a great idea of where most of the GMs stand in their building efforts. During this process, observe these managers in order to figure out their game plan, then attempt to find any biases that might be at play. Doing so will influence trade talks in your favour and will likely help maximize the return for your team."

Trade Fever IV - Types of Preferences: Draft Edition

[~ Monday September 20th 2010](#)

"In continuation of the last Trade Fever article, this entry will focus on the types of draft styles and preferences seen in managers when drafting a team. Whether it's a bias, a fluke or a habit, the following types might seem very familiar to you. While they might not require the same set of skills or influences needed to play the player, it's a great refresher to have come draft time. Get yourself a cup of coffee and enjoy the read!"



Trade Fever V - Intro to Keeper Leagues and the Importance of Strategy

[~ Monday November 1st 2010](#)

"Playing the player is not just about playing rival managers, it is also about playing yourself. You can't forget that you're a player in the same league as everyone else and it's sometimes easy to lose focus of that fact. If you want to be a better poolie, you have to understand which kind of player you are, and need to see the big picture as you decide which direction to take your team in. Whichever route you take, it must align with your game plan and you must stick to it. You will face many tough decisions, some you might not want to make. If you're committed to the strategy you laid out, you'll be able to take advantage of key situations and better not only your team but yourself as well."

Trade Fever VI - Competitive Limbo & Self Auditing Your Team

[~ Saturday December 11th 2010](#)

"A lot of feedback was generated from the last issue regarding Competitive Limbo, many managers found themselves and their teams in Limbo without direction. This edition of Trade Fever will cater to those teams and provide some self auditing techniques. Being able to self audit your team can give you the leg up when attempting to play the player. Why? Because it gives you the chance to know where you stand, the direction you're headed in and pin point what your needs are."



Trade Fever VII - Actions at the Trade Table

[~ Tuesday January 4th 2011](#)

<http://tinyurl.com/TFever7>

"Being part of a fantasy league allows us to become GMs and manage our very own teams to victory. Just like the real NHL though, some build their teams well and gain reputation while others simply fizzle out and eventually step down or get replaced. It takes a strong draft and sharp trading skills to stay in the running year after year - one small trade could set your team back at least one or more seasons if done incorrectly. As seen in previous editions of Trade Fever, there are steps that can be taken, such as self-auditing your team and understanding the opposition you're dealing with, in order to maximize your team's potential. This intro to trading will highlight the different actions met at the trade table, and show you how to react when faced with certain traders."

GMGates' Top 100 Roto Keepers

Roto Legend

Categories – G, A, +/-, PIM, PPP, SOG, Hits & Blocked Shots

Current Roto Score (CRS) – on pace score combined cats.

Potential Roto Score (PRS) – Peak performance score.

Dynasty Draft – Where ranked players may get drafted.

Monster – Known to put up massive numbers in this stat.

R3 – Consistently puts up good numbers in this stat.

R2 – Consistently puts up decent numbers in this stat.

Team – Three tier franchise value boost

LM – Last month's rank // **MOV** - Movement

Disclaimer

This is not a player to player draft guide simply because the flow of draft, positions required and many other needs come into play. Positions and salary do not affect rankings.

It is a value based list based on my opinion. If you are looking for a numbers game or league-based calculations, Frozen Pool and HockeyPoolGeek of the Dobber Sports Network are two very valuable sources.

Roto Rank	Skaters Name / Position / Team	CRS	PRS	Roto Focus			LM	MOV
				Monster	R3	R2		
1.	Alex Ovechkin, LW – WSH	18	24	G	SOG	Hits		
2.	Sidney Crosby, C – PIT IR	N/A	23	G	PPP	FW*		
3.	Evgeny Malkin, C – PIT	20	22	A	SOG	G		
4.	Steven Stamkos, C – TBL	18	22	G	SOG	A		
5.	Daniel Sedin, LW – VAN	17	22	G	+/-	PPP		
6.	C. Giroux, C/RW – PHI	17	21	A	G	PPP	7	+1
7.	Henrik Sedin, C – VAN	17	20	A	+/-	PPP	9	+2
8.	N. Backstrom, C – WSH IR	17	20	A	PPP	+/-	6	-2
9.	Corey Perry, RW – ANA	17	22	G	PIM	SOG	8	-1
10.	Pavel Datsyuk, C/LW – DET	16.5	19	G	A	PPP	12	+2
11.	Scott Hartnell, LW – PHI	19	19	PIM	Hits	G	17	+6
12.	David Backes, C/RW - STL	18.5	19	G	PIM	Hits	22	+10
13.	Zdeno Chara, D – BOS	17	18	+/-	SOG	A	15	+2
14.	Shea Weber, D – NSH	17	18	Hits	G	SOG	19	+5
15.	Zach Parise, LW – NJD	16	20	G	SOG	+/-	13	-2

16.	Patrick Sharp, C/LW – CHI	16	19	G	SOG	PPP	10	-6
17.	Ryan Callahan, C/LW – NYR	17	19	Hits	SOG	G	16	-1
18.	Dion Phaneuf, D – TOR	17	18	Hits	PIM	SOG	22	+4
19.	Milan Lucic, LW – BOS	17	18	G	PIM	Hits	25	+6
20.	James Neal, LW – PIT	16.5	18	G	SOG	Hits	35	+15
21.	Ryan Kesler, C – VAN	16	19	G	PPP	SOG	11	-10
22.	Ryan Getzlaf, C – ANA	16	19	A	PPP	Hits	14	-8
23.	Jamie Benn, LW – DAL	16	18	A	SOG	Hits	18	-5
24.	Marian Hossa, RW – CHI	16	18	G	A	SOG	23	-1
25.	Dustin Brown, RW – LAK	15.5	18	Hits	G	SOG	26	+1
26.	H. Zetterberg, C/LW – DET	13	19	SOG	G	A	21	-5
27.	Anze Kopitar, C – LAK	14	18	G	PPP	A	34	+7
28.	Jonathan Toews, C – CHI	14.5	18	G	+/-	A	27	-1
29.	Kris Letang, D – PIT	14	18	A	+/-	Hits	30	-1
30.	Mike Richards, C – LAK	14	19	G	SOG	Hits	20	-10
31.	Patrick Kane, C/RW - CHI	14.5	18	G	PPP	A	28	-3
32.	A. Burrows, LW/RW – VAN	14	18	G	PIM	+/-	29	-3
33.	Johan Franzen, RW – DET	14.5	17	G	SOG	PPP	39	+6
34.	Eric Staal, C – CAR	12	19	SOG	G	PPP	31	-3
35.	Jeff Carter, C/RW – CBJ	11.5	20	SOG	G	+/-	33	-2
36.	M. Gaborik, RW – NYR	15	17	G	PPP	SOG	66	+30
37.	Alexander Edler, D – VAN	16.5	17	A	Hits	BS		
38.	Brad Marchand, C/LW – BOS	15	17	+/-	G	PIM		
39.	(R) Evander Kane, LW – WPG	13.5	18	G	Hits	SOG	36	-3
40.	Patrick Marleau, LW – SJS	13	18	G	SOG	A		

41.	I. Kovalchuk, LW/RW – NJD	12	18	G	SOG	A		
42.	Jarome Iginla, RW – CGY	12.5	18	G	PPP	SOG		
43.	Bobby Ryan, LW – ANA	12	19	G	SOG	Hits	32	-11
44.	Ryane Clowe, LW – SJS	13	18	PIM	Hits	A		
45.	Joe Pavelski, C – SJS	15	18	G	PPP	SOG	52	+7
46.	Phil Kessel, RW – TOR	13	18	G	SOG	PPP	43	-3
47.	Steve Ott, RW – DAL	16.5	17	PIM	Hits	G	59	+12
48.	(R) Erik Karlsson, D – OTT	16.5	17	A	G	PPP	53	+5
49.	(R) PK Subban, D – MTL	16	17	PIM	SOG	BS	59	+10
50.	Dan Boyle, D – SJS	16.5	17	PPP	A	BS	58	+8
51.	(R) John Tavares, C – NYI	15	19	G	PPP	SOG	71	+20
52.	Keith Yandle, D – PHX	13	18	A	PPP	BS	50	-2
53.	Drew Doughty, D – LAK	13	18	A	Hits	+/-	48	-5
54.	Thomas Vanek, LW – BUF	14	17	G	SOG	PPP		
55.	Mike Green, D – WSH IR	N/A	18	A	PPP	+/-	49	-6
56.	B. Dubinsky, C – NYR	13	18	G	PIM	Hits	64	+8
57.	(R) Tyler Seguin, C – BOS	13	18	A	+/-	G	46	-13
58.	Dany Heatley, RW – MIN	13	18	G	PPP	SOG	51	-6
59.	(R) Logan Couture, C – SJS	14	17	G	+/-	SOG	55	-3
60.	Ryan Suter, D – NSH	14	17	A	+/-	PPP		
61.	Dan Girardi, D – NYR	14	17	Hits	BS	+/-		
62.	Daniel Briere, C/RW – PHI	13	17	G	SOG	PIM	56	-7
63.	J. Lupul, LW/RW - TOR	16	16	G	A	SOG	81	+17
64.	Rick Nash, RW – CBJ	13	18	G	SOG	A	65	+1
65.	Dustin Byfuglien, D – WPG	12	18	SOG	Hits	G	45	-19

66.	Duncan Keith, D – CHI	13	18	A	SOG	BS		
67.	V. Lecavalier, C – TBL	12.5	17	SOG	PPP	G	69	+2
68.	(R) G. Landeskog, LW – COL	12	18	SOG	Hits	G	47	-21
69.	Mikko Koivu, C – MIN	13	17	A	PPP	SOG	63	-6
70.	(R) Taylor Hall, LW – EDM	12	18	G	A	SOG		
71.	Brent Seabrook, D – CHI	12.5	18	Hits	BS	PIM	67	-4
72.	Alex Semin, LW – WSH	12	18	G	+/-	A		
73.	P. Bergeron, C – BOS	15	16	G	A	SOG	88	+15
74.	Jason Spezza, C – OTT	15	16	G	A	PPP	97	+21
75.	David Clarkson, RW – NJD	15	17	PIM	Hits	SOG	N	
76.	Michael Del Zotto, D – NYR	15	16	Hits	+/-	A	N	
77.	Tomas Plekanec, C – MTL	12	17	G	A	SOG	73	-4
78.	Joe Thornton, C – SJS	12	17	A	PPP	G	74	-4
79.	Brad Richards, C – NYR	12	17	A	G	PPP	68	-11
80.	(W) M St. Louis, RW – TBL	12	17	G	A	PPP	76	-4
81.	Kimmo Timonen, D – PHI	14	16	A	BS	+/-	79	-2
82.	(R) Ryan N-H., C – EDM	N/A	18	A	G	PPP	75	-7
83.	Chris Kunitz, LW – PIT	14	17	G	SOG	Hits	N	
84.	Steve Downie, RW – TBL	13	17	PIM	Hits	G		
85.	(R) Jeff Skinner, C/RW – CAR	N/A	18	G	A	SOG	76	-11
86.	D. Wideman, D – WSH	13	16	A	SOG	BS	N	
87.	T. Fleischmann, W – FLA	13	16	A	G	PPP		
88.	Kris Versteeg, W – FLA	13	17	A	G	SOG	85	-3
89.	(R) M. Duchene, C – COL	N/A	18	G	A	SOG		
90.	(R) Jordan Eberle, W – EDM	13	18	G	A	SOG		

91.	Matthew Martin, LW – DAL	14	16	Hits	PIM	-	N	
92.	PA Parenteau, RW – NYI	14	16	A	SOG	PPP	N	
93.	(W) T. Selanne, RW – ANA	12.5	16	G	PPP	A		
94.	Wayne Simmonds, RW – PHI	14	17	PIM	SOG	Hits	N	
95.	(R) Jordan Staal, C – PIT	N/A	16	G	Hits	+/-	92	-3
96.	Erik Cole, LW – MTL	14	16	G	SOG	Hits	N	
97.	Olli Jokinen, C - CGY	14	17	A	SOG	G	N	
98.	Stephen Weiss, C – FLA	14	16	A	PPP	+/-	83	-15
99.	(W) S. Doan, RW – PHX	12	17	G	Hits	PPP	95	-4
100.	J. Pominville, RW – BUF	12	16	G	A	PPP	98	-2

Notable (Bubble) Forwards :

Notable (Bubble) Defensemen :

M. Grabovski
M. Cammalleri
R. Bourque
T. Zajac
M. Ribeiro
C. Clutterbuck

M. Hanzal
M. Moulson
T.J. Oshie
J. Van Riemsdyk
D. Roy
L. Eriksson

L. Visnovski
C. Pronger
D. Seidenberg
K. Bieksa
K. Shattenkirk
M. Del Zotto

T. Hamonic
N. Lidstrom
N. Kronwall
B. Campbell
I. White
M. Stuart



On the 15th of every month, **Gates Imbeau** releases the [Top 100 Roto Players](#) Exclusive. In addition to this, he runs the [Black Aces](#), otherwise known as the DobberHockey farm team. Gates also pens a weekly Studs and Duds recap at [Fantrax.com](#).

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Basic Rules to ... the Process of Trading

by Yas Guthe

Know Yourself

There are a great variety of personalities and strategies among fantasy hockey GMs that are well documented. An effective manager knows how to size up and make deals with each of the many archetypes represent in their leagues' managers. However, this is not to say making trades is all about the other manager because a good manager knows what he is getting out of the trade and how it relates to both the team's present and future. For this reason, it is important before thinking about a trade that they know which direction they want to take their team; especially in a keeper league—are they going for it all this year, two years from now or a middle ground which, requires making adjustments mid-season.

Know the Players

It is perhaps this step in the process that most GMs routinely make the most mistakes, even among experienced managers. First, it is a good idea to know what other people think of the NHL player or prospect and how highly they value him. Secondly and the most important process is determining how highly you view this prospect: read websites, know the general expectations of a "good" player statistically from the league they are in, consider any trends of similar players that relate, know where they fall in their NHL organization's overall depth chart, find any injury history, and watch some game footage when possible. All these aspects of a player are crucial to consider his true value and are well worth your time. Some of them are easier to find out than others since depth charts are easy enough to figure out both at the NHL team and prospect levels. As prospects become more obscure with fewer sources of information about them than relying on reading statistics and knowing the leagues they play in become crucial. Most worldly hockey fans know the general statistical expectations of each league as a whole but also knowing the teams that the player is on also can give a leg up on the competition before you get to the negotiating table. In both deep leagues, where quickness to assess and sign talent in the limitless prospect pool of hockey players is often key to getting steals and also in small leagues, where the subtle differences in first round picks require a knowledge of the detail because after pick five or ten, not every pick is destined to be a superstar.

Before you say a word

One of the most over-valued parts of making trades is the mind game between two GMs, which is not to be confused with general communication. It certainly is easy and rewarding to get that extra pick, force an issue and generally rip off a GM. However, most trades will be made or lost through differences between the two sides' perceived values of the assets being dealt. If you are a manager that likes to send out horrendously lopsided offers, be ready for the league to try to veto your trades or lose respect for you. Even if you don't care about leaving a bad taste in the mouth of the rest of the league, if you are relying on other people's lack of knowhow or experience than at some point you will be ripped off yourself because you are not staying on top of the knowledge. The easy way out does work but it is best (and maybe more ethical) to worry about how the potential deal relates to the already established goals for the team instead of how to rip off the competition.

Another pitfall is not accurately analyzing what your competition is looking for in a possible trade with you. If his roster is filled with young NHL players and good prospects, he is likely near the bottom of the standings in a rebuilding mode—so his interest in Erik Cole is probably pretty low. If he has a mixture of talents or mostly veteran group, he likely is looking to compete—meaning he is not going to give up a bunch of his NHL talent for a good prospect or two. Even though their place in the standings and makeup of their roster is usually a pretty sure indicator of which direction they want to go, sometimes general managers try to drastically shift their course. The process of analyzing the trajectory of your trading partner is similar to how you think of your own team's timeline of competition for a title.

Read and Response

Once you have sent a reasonable offer and it is not accepted right away, there are typical responses: "I need more value from you," "I can't trade player(s) X," or "I like the player(s) offered but I'd prefer player(s) Y from your team." There are other responses but if you did your homework and sent a reasonable offer these should be what you get in response. In addition to a response, you may also get an actual counter offer. If you do not get a counter offer than make your own or discuss, just make sure you demonstrate that you read their feedback on your original offer. From here just make sure you go through and assess: which direction do I want to take my team, how do the assets involved help or hurt that vision and what is my personal take on each asset compared to their usual market value.

It is best to stay away from GMs that are not going to give you value that matches market value or your own view of how much value you put into them. Otherwise, be patient and flexible but keep that big picture in perspective, which you shape with each move you make. Many times we can try to accurately dissect roster moves all we want and still end up with a few unforeseen duds. The goal though is to limit how many duds you end up with in the end. Your big picture can end up a jumbled mess or a picture perfect team with the proper attention and approach.

Trade deadline

team-by-team breakdown

by Mac Vincent



Anaheim Ducks

The Ducks are in a very surprising spot right now when you look at the Western Conference. Knowing that team, they're going to really try and compete for a playoff spot. However, they may have dug themselves a hole too deep. With only 45 points as of February 2nd, the Ducks sit in 13th place in the West. Sure, they have the talent but all the teams in front of them aren't going to be easy to beat.

Needs: All season long, the Ducks defence has been suspect and its clear that they need to acquire another shutdown defenceman.

Options: The Ducks could go after Luke Schenn, Bryan Allen, Steve Staios, Marek Zidlicky, Mark Methot and many others. There's no problem with the forward group they have, but their defence is lacking.

Boston Bruins

Boston is such a well-built team and I don't see them doing much at the trade deadline. The only area they might want to address is third and fourth line forwards, just to make their chances of bringing home another Stanley Cup that much better in 2012.

Needs: Depth forwards.

Options: Boston could go after Antoine Vermette, Andrei Kostitsyn, Tuomo Ruutu and other players that could fill their third or fourth line to fuel up for another run at the Stanley Cup.

Buffalo Sabres

It's been a disaster season in Buffalo and its fair to say nobody expected this when the NHL season started. The hockey world was excited about the Sabres and the additions they made such as Christian Ehrhoff, Ville Leino and Robyn Regehr. Buffalo still has a chance in the East, but its not looking good at this point.

Needs: Draft picks and young forwards.

Options: The Sabres could go after some young players that could be on the market, because that's exactly what they need. Sam Gagner, James van Riemsdyk and prospects would be good fits for the Sabres.

Calgary Flames

Calgary as always, is in the hunt for a playoff spot and looking to add a few pieces to try and make it once again. Everyone thought it would be a rebuilding year for the Flames, but their most recent acquisition of Mike Cammalleri says otherwise. Miikka Kiprusoff is still playing well and is in great shape for a 35-year-old goalie.

Needs: Top six forwards and a shutdown defenceman.

Options: The Flames want to do everything they can to increase their chances of making the playoffs in a very competitive Western Conference. A big, physical defenceman like Nicklas Grossman of the Dallas Stars would be a great acquisition for Calgary. The Flames could also inquire on P.A. Parenteau.

Carolina Hurricanes

Carolina has had a tough year and they will likely trade players such as Tuomo Ruutu and Bryan Allen. It's looking very much like the Hurricanes are going to start rebuilding for the future. You can look for them to acquire young players, prospects and draft picks during the deadline. I have a very hard time believing they'll deal Cam Ward, he's so important to that team and will be extremely difficult to replace.

Needs: Draft picks and young players.

Options: Carolina would be smart to explore acquiring young players like Sam Gagner, Nazem Kadri, Derick Brassard, Drew Stafford, Luke Schenn and prospects that are nearly NHL ready. The Hurricanes aren't far away from competing and have prospects like Zac Dalpe, Ryan Murphy and Mike Murphy. They also have several really good young players currently in the NHL, such as Jeff Skinner and Justin Faulk.



Chicago Blackhawks

If there's anything the Blackhawks need, its help on the back end and another top six forward. Marcus Kruger just isn't good enough and Dave Bolland seems to be comfortable in his third line role, despite being a pretty good scorer in his junior hockey days. The Blackhawks could afford to trade prospects like Dylan Olsen and Shawn Lalonde as well as draft picks so they can address team needs. I don't see them trading Brandon Pirri, Jimmy Hayes, Brandon Saad, Kyle Beach, Adam Clendening, Mark McNeill, Alex Salak or Jeremy Morin.

Needs: Defencemen and top six forwards.

Options: Despite acquiring Brendan Morrison, I still believe they'll acquire another forward. Look for the Blackhawks to go after forwards like Tuomo Ruutu and Derek Roy.

Colorado Avalanche

Colorado isn't likely to move much and Milan Hejduk doesn't appear to be going anywhere after being named team captain near the start of the season. They will field offers on Paul Stastny, Daniel Winnik, Jan Hejda, Cody McLeod, Chuck Kobasew, Jay McClement, Ryan O'Byrne, Shane O'Brien and maybe Kyle Quincey.

Needs: Young players and draft picks.

Options: With a lot of players available and so many teams in need, Colorado could really capitalize on a buyers market and bring in some really good young players.

Columbus Blue Jackets



Simply put, Columbus is a mess. Why did the team trade for a top six forward like Jeff Carter, when they could have gone after a goalie with the package they were offering? The Flyers will tell you they're thrilled with the draft pick that ended up being Sean Couturier, a 2011 third round draft pick and a really good young player in Jakub Voracek. As soon as I heard this happened I was skeptical of Carter fitting in well with the Jackets. Rick Nash needs a playmaker in the middle, not a sniper. So far Carter has been unlucky with injuries and very disappointing. Steve Mason will either be traded now or let go in the off-season; he's as good as gone in Columbus.

Needs: Young players, especially a young goalie.

Options: Columbus would be incredibly smart to go after young netminder Jonathan Bernier. That is the one player they should be focused on acquiring.



Dallas Stars

Dallas has really been impressive after suffering a huge loss in the off-season. Some people thought that with Brad Richards gone, Dallas would have a hard time being competitive. Thanks to great goaltending from Kari Lehtonen and the emergence of young winger Jamie Benn, the Stars are hanging in there. The team probably won't make the playoffs this year and is looking to add a few more young players by offering up veterans like Brenden Morrow to contenders.

Needs: Young players, especially young defencemen.

Options: The Stars have assets like Mike Ribeiro and veteran players that they can trade for young players, draft picks and prospects.



Detroit Red Wings

Detroit continues to lead the Western Conference despite being one of the oldest teams in the league. People always say, what will happen when Nicklas Lidstrom retires or some of the core players are too old? Well, Pavel Datsyuk is 33 and looks as good as he's ever been, leading the Red Wings during the first half of the season. Jimmy Howard has fallen on hard times, breaking a finger and is expected to be out a few weeks. The Red Wings are expected to be looking for some help in net and a good target for them would be Evgeni Nabokov of the New York Islanders. Detroit tried to bring over Nabokov in 2011, but he was claimed due to the waiver process.

Needs: A second goalie and some depth forwards or one more top six forward.

Options: Detroit is known to be interested in Edmonton's Ales Hensky and Carolina's Tuomo Ruutu, they would be willing to give up a draft pick or perhaps a prospect in a package for one of those players. Detroit also is interested in pending unrestricted free agent Ryan Suter, so they'll try to save money to sign him in the summer.



Edmonton Oilers

The Oilers are team that has a ton of young talent and likely won't want to give much away, but it is possible that they will trade forward Sam Gagner. The Oilers will have yet another lottery pick by the looks of it and they'll continue to add to the amazing young core they have assembled. They're rumored to be looking for a young defenceman and they could pursue one of Nashville's D, because they have so many in the system.

Needs: Young defencemen and experienced players.

Options: Nashville is a team that has a big need for forwards. They're obviously a very good team, but adding a forward or two would really help them out. The Oilers have some cards to play at the trade deadline, that's for sure.

Florida Panthers

The Panthers have been a great surprise this season. The team underwent major changes in the offseason. They hired a new general manager, Dale Tallon. It was truly a great move by the team and the results have showed. They acquired Kris Versteeg, drafted young stud Jonathan Huberdeau and signed Jose Theodore. Everything is going well for the team and they continue to be right in the playoff race.

Needs: Experienced players.

Options: Tuomo Ruutu, Antoine Vermette, Sam Gagner and other players would help Florida's chances this year. However, it's safe to say they didn't expect they would be in the playoff race right now.

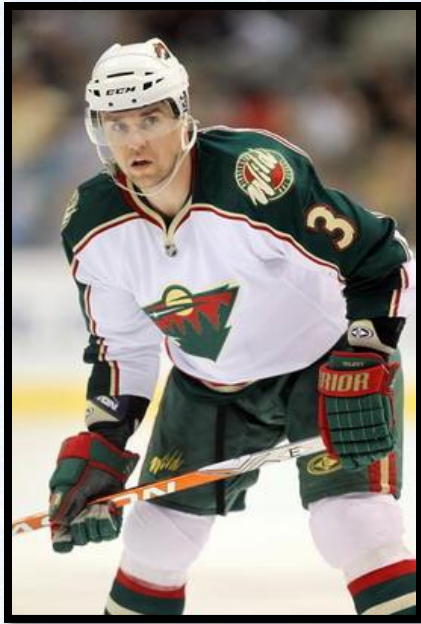
Los Angeles Kings

The Kings are in a dogfight for one of the last few playoff spots in the West and they're looking to add some firepower to the lineup. They're supposedly willing to give up top young goalie Jonathan Bernier and many young teams should be interested. The best move for them would be to acquire Jeff Carter from Columbus, because he's used to playing with Mike Richards and he'd jump right into a playoff situation. He's not used to playing on a team like Columbus and it still confuses me why Columbus traded for him. The Kings also have a ton of young goalie prospects, including Martin Jones, Jeff Zatkoff and J.F. Berube.

Needs: Top six forwards.

Options: As I said, I think they'll trade for Jeff Carter because it makes sense at this point to do so. They could also go after Tuomo Ruutu, Antoine Vermette and other top six players.





Minnesota Wild

Minnesota is an interesting situation and one of the hardest teams to get a read on in the whole league. They obviously thought that they had a chance to compete this year and that's why they decided to trade for Dany Heatley and Devin Setoguchi. Its pretty safe to say they're expecting more from Heatley and that's really going to affect their chances, if he continues to be a mediocre player.

Needs: Young prospects and draft picks.

Options: The Wild are probably not good enough to make the playoffs this season, so they should probably be open to trading players like Matt Cullen, Josh Harding and Marek Zidlicky. Teams are looking for goalies, top six forwards and defencemen.

Montreal Canadiens

Montreal needs to accept the fact that they're not a very good team and rebuild. They have some pieces that are going to be very good for years and they should build around those players. Carey Price, P.K. Subban, Max Pacioretty, Raphael Diaz, David Desharnais, Louis Leblanc and Nathan Bealieu are the guys that team should build around. They should be taking offers for almost every single other player on their team and try to acquire young players and draft picks.

Needs: Young players and prospects.

Options: Montreal should go after players that are 25 and under as well as any draft picks they can get.

Nashville Predators

Nashville has almost everything they need to be a very dangerous team come playoff time, but a few extra forwards would be very beneficial to that team. Nashville has prospects that they'd be willing to trade and possibly even their first round pick could be available if the deal is right. I see them trying to add another forward by trading either a prospect or one of their young dmen. The Predators are blessed with some very good young defencemen. Those include Ryan Ellis, Jonathan Blum, Roman Josi, Kevin Klein and of course Shea Weber and Ryan Suter.

Needs: Top six forwards and depth forwards.

Options: Nashville has many options as far as acquiring a forward. Mike Ribeiro is a guy I think would be a really nice fit in Nashville and someone they should consider going after.

New Jersey Devils

New Jersey is a team with a lot of question marks, despite the fact that they are in a playoff position right now. One had to wonder how the team would survive without Martin Brodeur, who is nearing retirement and on the final year of his contract with the Devils. There are young goalies available, but they'll probably wait until the summer to really find that next goalie for the franchise. Young goalies like Jonathan Bernier, Cory Schneider and Josh Harding should be of interest to the team. They also need more depth on the blueline, as their team is full of unproductive defencemen.

Needs: A young goalie and defencemen.

Options: The best fit for the Devils would be to try and acquire Lubomir Visnovsky of the Anaheim Ducks, he would be able to quarterback that powerplay with Ilya Kovalchuk and really help the team out where they so sorely need it.

New York Islanders



The Islanders continue to improve as a team and they're looking like a definite contender next year and beyond. This year I don't see them making the playoffs, therefore they will be looking to sell their veteran assets like Evgeni Nabokov for draft picks or young players. Al Montoya could even be available for the right price and the team seemingly sees Kevin Poulin as the next starter. Poulin has performed well when called upon in the NHL and he's ready to try and be the next starter for the Islanders. The core of the team and captain Mark Streit are probably not going anywhere, but players like Steve Staios, Brian Rolston, Al Montoya, P.A. Parenteau, Mark Eaton and Milan Jurcina.

Needs: Defencemen.

Options: The Islanders need to continue to build up their D core, as they already have Mark Streit, Travis Hamonic, Andrew MacDonald and a few others. They need more and should be looking at acquiring younger defencemen when trading away players to contenders. The forward group looks very good, now they just need to shore up their blueline.



New York Rangers

The Rangers have enjoyed a fantastic season with their tremendous depth and superb goaltending from Henrik Lundqvist. You hardly notice Brad Richards isn't performing well, because they're getting production from Marian Gaborik, Derek Stepan, Ryan Callahan. Then there are the players that nobody talks about, like Ryan McDonagh and Dan Girardi, who are a huge part of the team. John Tortorella is the perfect fit for that team and kudos to the Rangers front office for sticking with him, he has that team playing really well. The Rangers will look to add some more depth forwards and could pursue pretty much anyone, because this could be their year.

Needs: Depth forwards.

Options: As I mentioned, the Rangers can go after pretty much any player. I don't see them going after a Tuomo Ruutu type, they'll be looking for upgrades in the lineup and tough players. Brenden Morrow would be an interesting fit in New York.

Ottawa Senators

Ottawa has fallen on hard times of late after a very impressive finish to the first half of the season. They are barely in a playoff spot, with the Panthers and Jets right behind them. Nobody expected they'd make the playoffs and I still think they will come up short, but I don't see them doing much at the trade deadline. Players that would be of interest to other teams are important for Ottawa and they'll likely keep them around. Examples include Nick Foligno and Filip Kuba, while Daniel Alfredsson and the rest of the team probably won't be moving.

Needs: Young players and draft picks.

Options: Ottawa should be looking to add more young talent at the trade deadline either on the blueline or with more forwards.



Philadelphia Flyers

Philadelphia is a well-built team and if they can just get some consistent goaltending, they'll be a very dangerous team come playoff time. Claude Giroux leads that team and they're a sure bet to make the playoffs, barring some unforeseen collapse in the second half. The Flyers should be looking at several defencemen and among those, Luke Schenn of the Toronto Maple Leafs should be a primary target.

Needs: Defencemen.

Options: Trading James van Riemsdyk in a deal for Luke Schenn or going after veteran defencemen like Jay Harrison and Sheldon Souray.

Pittsburgh Penguins

Pittsburgh continues to be very patient and cautious with star centre Sidney Crosby and has seen Evgeni Malkin step up to be the teams best player and the league leader in points as we speak. The Penguins don't need much, but could certainly benefit if they traded for a few depth forwards.

Needs: Depth forwards

Options: Antoine Vermette and Mike Ribeiro are two players that I see fitting well in Pittsburgh. With Jordan Staal out for a while, the team needs some help up front if they want to stay in the playoff race. Sidney Crosby seems to be getting closer, but we really have no idea when he will return.

Phoenix Coyotes

Phoenix is right in the playoff race and would be smart to look at acquiring some forward depth if they want to make the playoffs this season. Phoenix is a rare situation, because the way they win is by playing as a team and counting on production from everyone and their forward group could use a tweak or two so that they don't have to rely on Ray Whitney, Martin Hanzal and Radim Vrbata for all the offense.

Needs: forward depth.

Options: Jeff Carter could be a good fit in Phoenix and the system in place can really turn any player into something of value. We've seen countless players rejuvenate their career in Phoenix and that's a credit to the coaching staff and management.

San Jose Sharks

The Sharks are once again in position to do some considerable damage in the playoffs and will look to add some more depth players to the team. They don't need much, but with Martin Havlat out for a while they should be looking at top six forward or big physical forwards

Needs: Physical forwards.

Options: Travis Moen and Chad LaRose are two players the Sharks should pursue.



St. Louis Blues

The Blues have enjoyed a fantastic season since hiring Ken Hitchcock and utilizing both Brian Elliott and Jaroslav Halak in net. The strong defence first system has benefited both goaltenders and the team is flourishing. They leave the scoring up to players like David Backes, T.J. Oshie and David Perron, who have come through for the team. Some offense comes from the blueline as well, with both Kevin Shattenkirk and Alex Pietrangelo providing just that. The Blues have covered up the awful play of Chris Stewart and are one of the top teams in the Western Conference. The team would really benefit from acquiring another shutdown D or two at the trade deadline.

Needs: Shutdown defencemen.

Options: Bryan Allen, Jay Harrison, Steve Staios and Mark Eaton are well within reach for the Blues.

Tampa Bay Lightning

Tampa has been pretty abysmal so far and they're going to need to put together a huge second half if they want to make the playoffs. They're second last in the Southeast division, with the Hurricanes only one point behind them. Inconsistent goaltending and poor play in their own end has dragged the team down. The scoring has been there for the star players, but not nearly enough depth.

Needs: Top six forwards and young players.

Options: Tampa is likely to try and move Ryan Malone. The team should be looking to acquire a first round pick or a pretty solid prospect when negotiating with other teams about him.

Toronto Maple Leafs

The Leafs are on track to make the playoffs and you really can't say enough about the amazing job Brian Burke has done at the helm for the Leafs. With tremendous depth on defence, the Leafs are likely to pursue a top six forward. The most reasonable target for them is Flyers winger James van Riemsdyk. The Flyers need defence and the Leafs could use another top six forward, it's a perfect match, right? Its not quite that simple, as Philadelphia is very hesitant to trade van Riemsdyk. Toronto will take a shot at Ryan Getzlaf and possibly Bobby Ryan, but that seems unlikely to happen at this point.

Needs: Top six forwards and depth players.

Options: If the Leafs want to make the playoffs, they need more depth and there are so many forwards on the market this season. Look for Brian Burke to be very active on the trade front.

Vancouver Canucks

Vancouver can clearly score with the best of them, but the team lacks physical players and should be looking to add more during the trade deadline. Having more players like Maxim Lapierre is essential if they want to contend for the cup in 2012. Vancouver should be willing to trade their first round pick and definitely prospects, but it's in their best interest to keep Nicklas Jensen, Kevin Connauton and Eddie Lack. Other than those players, pretty much all their prospects could be available in a trade.

Needs: Physical forwards.

Options: Travis Moen, R.J. Umberger and Tuomo Ruutu would all be great fits in Vancouver.

Washington Capitals

If you can use the term roller coaster, that best describes the Capitals season up until this point. Inconsistent scoring, spotty goaltending and lack of effort have all been issues for the Caps in 2011-2012. The team decided to cut ties with Bruce Boudreau and brought in Dale Hunter. Nicklas Backstrom has been very effective when healthy, but he's currently sidelined due to a head injury. Alex Ovechkin has been a bit inconsistent and the team really needs him to provide the offense while Backstrom is out. Alex Semin is also having a mediocre season, but seems to be figuring it out lately, as he's been one of the better players in the league over the past month. The issue with Semin is confidence and he needs to regain that scoring touch for Washington to have a chance in the East.

Needs: Defencemen and depth forwards.

Options: The Capitals have a terrific core group, so they should only consider trading away their first round pick or possibly some prospects. They have the ability to trade for almost anyone available; we'll see what the front office does at the deadline.

Winnipeg Jets

It's great to have another Canadian team in the NHL and the Jets are doing better than most people expected. The team is in competition for one of the last playoff spots in the East and will need to decide if they want to buy or sell at the trade deadline. Winnipeg has some assets to playoff teams, such as Kyle Wellwood, Tanner Glass, Chris Mason and Nick Antropov. Winnipeg will be looking for young players, prospects and draft picks if they do decide to be sellers. If they decide to be buyers, there are several players they could go after.

Needs: Young forwards and top six forwards

Options: The Jets could go after Sam Gagner, P.A. Parenteau, Derick Brassard, Andrei Kostitsyn and other forwards. As I said, it depends whether they decide to be buyers or sellers.



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